

THE ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY HORTENSIA COSMA-GOGA DURING HER TIME AS AN IMMIGRANT IN ITALY (1917 - 1919) FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND THE INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF GREATER ROMANIA

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Abstract. *In January 1917, Maria and Partenie Cosma emigrated to Italy accompanied by their daughters, Lucia and Hortensia, in the context of the latest developments in the Romanian war front. From there, Hortensia Cosma-Goga, would inform her husband - who was a part of the Romanian political elite preparing Romania's participation in the Peace Conference - of the pro-Romanian, pro-Hungarian, and pro-Serbian political views concerning the future of Greater Romania's western border.*

Keywords: *Hortensia Cosma-Goga, Italy, Genoa, 1917 - 1919, for Greater Romania*

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Hortensia was Partenie and Maria Cosma's third child.¹ Born in Sibiu, in 1880, she would also pass away in the town on the Cibin River, in 1965. The same as her elder sisters, she was educated to become a member of the then-current Romanian elite. More so given that her father was the executive director of *Albina* Bank in Sibiu, the first and most important Romanian-owned bank in Transylvania during the Austrian-Hungarian era,² while her mother was the niece of Miron Romanul, the Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church in Transylvania (1874 - 1898).³

Hortensia Cosma-Goga was educated by a governess (private tutor). Before starting primary school, she already had private tutors to study piano and to learn foreign languages (Hungarian, German, English) and the ballroom dances of the

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¹ The other children were: Lucia, born in 1875, in Beiuș (d. 1972, in Sibiu), Minerva (b. 1878, in Sibiu - d. 1957, in Sibiu), and the twins Romulus (b. 1888, in Sibiu - d. 1891, in Sibiu) and Remus (b. 1888, in Sibiu - d. 1958, in Sibiu).

² A few bibliographical references: Mihail Bota, *Viața lui Partenie Cosma*, Cluj, 1937, p. 40; Lucia Cosma, *Partenie Cosma. Amintiri cetite la Beiuș cu ocazia sărbătorilor pentru centenarul nașterii lui (1837-1923)*, Tipografia Românească, Timișoara, f.a., p. 19.; Pavel Berariu, *Partenie Cosma în slujba Ardealului*, București, 1938, p. 181; Ioan Lupăș, "Partenie Cosma (1837-1923), in the volume *Studii. Conferințe și comunicări istorice*, vol. III, Sibiu, 1941, pp. 269-273; Mihai D. Drecin, *Din activitatea financiar-bancară a bihoreanului Partenie Cosma în cadrul Băncii „Albina” din Sibiu*, in *Crisia* (Oradea), 1975, pp. 161-182, and others.

³ Ion Itu, *Lucia Cosma – destinul unei artiste*, Ed. Muzicală, Bucharest, 1976, pp. 13-16.

epoch, as well as bel canto, swimming, and ice skating. She attended primary school “as a day student” of the Romanian Civilian Girl School in Sibiu established in 1883, and later on enrolled in the Superior Civilian Girl School in Sibiu established by the local Romanian ethnics in 1886.⁴ After graduating high school, female students could enrol for two additional years of study, so high society girls would have been at least 18 years old when finishing school, which meant they “were ready for marriage”. Schools were functioning under the auspices of The Reunion of Romanian Women in Sibiu established in 1881, headed by Maria Cosma, first as secretary, and then, as president until 1915.⁵

While still in high school, the Cosma sisters were introduced by their mother to the workings of *Astra* as well as to the activity of serving lunch to the Romanian students (male students - *our note*) who were learning in the German and Hungarian high schools of Sibiu and were the beneficiaries of one free meal daily in the “Student Lunch” program established in 1895 by Partenie Cosma. *Albina* Bank was granting 50 annual scholarships to the highest performing students, most of them originating from lower income families. The student dining hall was located inside the *Albina* Bank of Sibiu. Its role was to provide not only nourishment in the form of food, but also spiritual nourishment, since the dining hall was hosting weekly reviews of Romanian (literature, history, and philosophy) books printed in Transylvania and the Kingdom of Romania. Young students were learning about the notion of national sentiment, something they were not familiar with in state-owned high schools.⁶ It was in this environment that Hortensia would meet young Octavian Goga, then a student of the Hungarian State High School in Sibiu and a beneficiary of the “Student Lunch” program.

Over the years, the adolescent friendship established between the years 1895 and 1899 would turn into love, despite the fact that, in 1899, Octavian, together with a few other class mates, would leave Sibiu and enrol with the Romanian High

⁴ Besides “day students” residing in Sibiu, the school was educating a large number of “boarders” originating from all parts of Transylvania and Bucovina, who were accommodated at the boarding school. The school was very well organised, both in terms of teaching subjects to its students, and in terms of the school and board’s daily schedule. The school’s teachers and managers were recruited from among high quality primary and secondary school teachers mostly from Transylvania, but also some originating from the Old Kingdom of Romania. See: Maria V. Onișor, *Amintirile mele*, book I (1881-1900), pp. 7-24, in preparation for printing. Editors: Mihai D. Drecin, Luminița Moga.

⁵ Elena Macavei, *Doamnele Astrei, 1861-1950, 1990-2023*, Ed. Asociațiunii Astra Sibiu, 2023, pp. 71-75, 118-130.

⁶ Mihai D. Drecin, *Banca „Albina” din Sibiu – instituție națională a românilor transilvăneni (1871-1918)*, Ed. Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1982, p. 168; Idem, *Banca de credit și instituțiile de asistență socială. Studiu de caz: Banca „Albina” din Sibiu (1872-1918)*, in *Historia Urbana*, Ed. Academia Română, Tome XVIII, 2010, pp. 115-119.

School in Șcheii Brașovului,⁷ outraged by the manner in which history was being taught by the chauvinist teacher Tompa Arpad, who was showing contempt towards the past of the Romanian population in Transylvania and the Kingdom of Romania. After becoming involved with politics and after publishing his first poems and prose volumes of patriotic inspiration,⁸ Octavian Goga would become, alongside Aurel Vlad from Orăștie,⁹ the leader of a new generation of politicians known as “the new activist generation” or the generation of “the steel-hardened young men”. His focus on sending Romanian deputies to the Parliament in Budapest with the purpose of supporting the rights of the Romanian population, while connections with the Kingdom of Romania were becoming increasingly tighter, promoted Octavian Goga to the forefront of the political battle of Romanians in Transylvania.

The civil marriage between Hortensia and Octavian Goga took place in June 1906, in Bucharest, and gained national and patriotic meaning. It happened in the capital of the Kingdom of Romania, the place of interest for all the Romanians under foreign occupation. Moreover, at that time, for a couple of weeks, Bucharest was the host of a grandiose Pan-Romanian National Fair celebrating 40 years of reign for Carol I, who became the King of Romania in 1881, as well as 1,800 years from the establishment of Roman domination in Dacia, an event that marked the beginning of the formation of the Romanian people.¹⁰ The wedding was attended besides the families of the two newly-weds, by political and cultural figures from among the Transylvanian Romanians who had fled from Transylvania, alongside prominent members of the elite in Romania. On 14 October 1906, in the Orthodox Cathedral in Sibiu, the religious marriage was performed by the monk Ilie Cristea, the future Bishop of Caransebeș (1910 - 1919), who would then become the first Patriarch of Greater Romania. The godparents were Alexandru and Alexandrina Vlahuță.¹¹

When he became a member of the Partenie Cosma family, Octavian Goga, as son-in-law, was provided with great material wealth by his father-in-law. Besides a house with furniture, cutlery and crockery purchased from Vienna, Budapest, and

⁷ Cf. Onisifor Ghibu, *Amintiri despre oameni pe care i-am cunoscut*, Ed. Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1974, pp. 74-75.

⁸ *Poezii*, Budapest, 1905; *O samă de cuvinte*, Sibiu, 1908. Strong echoes in the press at the time from the literary elite. See: George Panu, in *Săptămâna* (Bucharest), no. 122, 1905; Sextil Pușcariu, *Convorbiri literare (Iasi)*, no. 2, 1906; Nicolae Iorga, *O luptă literară*, II, 1906.

⁹ See: Valentin Orga, *Aurel Vlad. Istorie și Destin*, (revised and expanded edition), Ed. Argonaut, Cluj-Napoca, 2018.

¹⁰ Mihai D. Drecin, *Două evenimente expoziționale românești în slujba consolidării unității naționale: Sibiu (1905), București (1906)*, in the volume *Din modernitate spre contemporaneitate. Studii istorice dedicate lui George Cipăianu la împlinirea vârstei de 75 de ani*, editors: Valentin Orga, Ottmar Trașcă, Liviu Țărău, Ed. Argonaut, Cluj-Napoca, 2017, pp. 150-158.

¹¹ *Octavian Goga în corespondență. Documente literare*, edition curated by Mihai Bordeianu and Ștefan Lemny, Ed. Minerva, Bucharest, 1983, vol. II, pp. 41-42. See also Lucan C. Marțian, *Octavian Goga-omul politic*, Ed. Universității din Oradea, 2010, p. 157.

Arad,¹² Octavian Goga would benefit from sums of money that would allow him, in his position as national poet and politician, to pay for trips in Western European countries (Italy, France, Switzerland, Spain, England, and Scotland)¹³, as well as for the prison time and press trials by the Hungarian regime, and the exile in Romania. Moreover, the father-in-law would try to promote Octavian Goga as member of the management team of *Albina* Bank, in order for him to benefit from the significant amounts of money paid for attending the regular meetings of the credit institution's central management body.¹⁴

Between the spring of 1915 and the autumn of 1919, the protection of her parents, Maria and Partenie Cosma, and the support for her husband who would emigrate to Bucharest and Iași and then to Paris, as member of the group of Romanian politicians who would attend the proceedings of the Peace Conference (I 1919 - VI 1920), would become Hortensia Cosma-Goga's responsibility.

The banking, cultural, and political connections that Partenie Cosma and *Albina* Bank had established in Bucharest, with both the conservative and the liberal camps, would allow the bank's executive director to find out in due time of the intention of the Kingdom of Romania to renounce the political neutrality declared in 1914 in favour of joining the Entente coalition. But Partenie Cosma was already an elderly (78 years old), sickly man and Romania's entering the war against the Central Powers would have meant his arrest and deportation as leader of the Romanians in Transylvania. That is why, as early as the spring of 1915, the Cosma spouses and their daughters, Hortensia and Lucia, would move to their villa in Călimănești/Vâlcea, i.e. in Romania; the villa had been built between 1911 and 1912, as a family retreat for holidays and spa treatments.

Changes in the front line along the Carpathians in the autumn of 1916, when the German and Austrian-Hungarian troops managed to resist the attack of the Romanian Army in Transylvania, with the Romanian troops subsequently retreating from Oltenia, Wallachia, and Dobrogea to Moldova, would make the Cosma family decide to take refuge in Iași. There, the family would be reunited with Octavian Goga, who also fled Bucharest, alongside the Royal House, the Government, the Parliament, the main cultural institutions, and part of the central press of Bucharest.

¹² *Octavian Goga în corespondență.....*, vol. II, pp. 53, 480, 495-496. Thonet chairs and Lengyel furniture were purchased from Budapest and Arad among others.

¹³ See the trip to Scotland (1910). Cf. Mihai D. Drecin, *Antecedente ale apropierei lui Octavian Goga de Masonerie. Studiu de caz: Corespondența dintre soții Goga din anii exilului italo-francez (toamna 1918-toamna 1919)*, in *Gnosis* (Sibiu), year V, no. 5, 2019, p. 15. Cf. *Dicționarul scriitorilor români, D-L*, coordinators and scientific reviewers: Mircea Zăciu, Marian Papahagi, Aurel Sasu, Ed. Fundației Culturale Române, Bucharest, 1998, p. 415.

¹⁴ *Octavian Goga în corespondență. Documente literare,*, vol. II, 1983, pp. 14-15, 52. Letters written by O. Goga to Hortensia and by Hortensia to O. Goga between February and March 1912, when the poet was incarcerated in Seghedin (Szeged).

In Iași, O. Goga would be involved in the printing of *La Roumanie* newspaper, in support of armed resistance and fight for national unity.

The Romanian Army defence of the southern Moldavian front took an unexpected blow with the retreat of Russian troops in the context of the revolutionary political unrest started in St. Petersburg and continued throughout the entire Russia. Under the circumstances, after a long and dangerous journey through Russia, Finland, Norway, Great Britain, and France, the Cosmas arrived in Italy on June 30, 1917, and settled in Genoa.¹⁵

Once in Italy, Hortensia worked as a caregiver in a French Military Hospital in Milan. She worked 12-14 hours a day, caring for the wounded soldiers of the Italian Army, but also for Austrian-Hungarian soldiers, including many Romanians from Transylvania.¹⁶ While her sister, Lucia, an opera singer, was more interested in attending the opera shows in the *La Scala* Opera House,¹⁷ Hortensia commuted between Milan and Genoa, took care of her elderly, sickly parents, paid for rent and utilities, as well as for food and other day-to-day expenses. Of her work as a caregiver in Milan, she would write to her husband, who was still in Iași, that, in the 400 Italian soldiers she cared for, she saw “our peasants”, some wounded, others sick with the terrible “flu” (the Spanish flu – *our note*) which was taking its toll particularly among civilians in Milan.¹⁸ The exhausting hospital work, the omnipresent Spanish flu, and the weekly commute to Genoa would eventually make Hortensia ill and bedridden. She would give up on her work in November 1918.¹⁹ After a long period of recovery, Hortensia would regain her health. She would stay with her parents in Genoa, increasingly involved with the Romanian migrants in Italy, who were trying to get organised and raise public awareness of the wishes and rights of the Romanians in the matter of union into one single national state.

The Octavian Goga – Manuscripts Fonds hosted by the Library of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest includes 15 letters sent by Hortensia to her husband in 1918, of which 5 letters written in the spring of the same year and sent to Iași, and 19 letters sent from Italy to Paris, where Goga arrived on 30 September

¹⁵ Mihai D. Drecin, Raluca Lenarth, *Refugiul românilor din teritoriul ocupat în anii Primului Război Mondial. Studiu de caz: Familia Partenie Cosma în Italia (toamna 1917 - toamna 1919)*, in *Crisia* (Oradea), vol. LI, Supplement, no. 1, 2021, pp. 169-186; Idem, *Russian Images and Impressions in the Correspondence Between the Refugee Hortensia Cosma-Goga (January-April 1917)*, in the volume *World War I. The Other Face of War*, edited by: Ioan Bolovan, Rudolf Gräf, Harald Heppner, Oana Mihaela Tămaș, Romanian Academy/ Center for Transylvanian Studies, Cluj University Press, 2016, pp. 143-150.

¹⁶ Library of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, *Fonds: Octavian Goga* mss. (hereinafter referred to as BARB. FOG, mss), letter S₁₁ (69)/CDLXXXVIII., Hortensia's letter: Paris, 4 III 1918 to O. Goga who was still in Iași.

¹⁷ Ion Itu, *op. cit.*, p. 85. Here, she would take bel canto lessons from prof. Michele Wigley.

¹⁸ BABB, FOG, S₁₁(69), CDLXXXVIII, p. 1.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, S₆₈(3)/CDLXXXVII. Lucia Cosma's letter to Octavian Goga who was still in Paris, dated 5 XI 1918.

1918; besides family matters, most of the letters comprise information concerning the Italian public and political opinions on Romanians, Hungarians, and Serbians, as well as information concerning the activities undertaken by Romanian migrants in Italy.

The correspondence reveals that Hortensia was aware - most likely from the Italian press, of the latest developments in Romanian politics in the period between the autumn of 1917 and the autumn of 1918, while her husband was in Iași (the Truce of Focșani, the Treaty of Buftea- Bucharest signed with the Central Powers (IV-V 1918), the armistice with Germany (11 XI 1918), Goga's election in Transylvania's Ruling Council, as minister without portfolio, the arrival of Romanian troops and of all officials, including General Berthelot, in Bucharest, and the retreat of German troops from Romania to the West, via Transylvania (1 XII 1918)).²⁰ From the same source of information, Hortensia would provide *La Roumanie*, the newspaper whose editor Octavian Goga was in Iași, with reverberations of the principle of self-determination by the nations oppressed by multinational empires, as stated by the North-American President W. Wilson in a document that received positive reviews in Italy. At the time, Italy was ravaged by the poverty induced by the country's efforts to join the Great War, where left and right political currents became manifest in the context of increasingly present Russian bolshevik ideas; the two currents would generate strikes and other violent actions involving the left socialist workers from Turin (led by Turati, a member of the Chamber of Deputies) and the nationalists ("true blood Italians – the black shadows"), the members of the faction *di combattimento*, where Mussolini's party would trace its origins. The Italian troops, sent to crush the workers' strike in Turin (with 50 dead victims officially reported and around 400 unofficial victims), would join the strikers in solidarity. Punished and sent to war in the first line of attack, the Italian troops would join forces with the Austrian-Hungarian troops which solely comprised Italians from the territories governed by the Dual Monarchy. The "treason" of some bolshevised troops would lead to the opening of a new front on the Piave River, threatening Lombardy and Milan to be occupied by the Austrian - Hungarian troops. The Italian Cavalry intervened and restored the balance of power. In the context of such serious social and political domestic turmoil, the Italian press was looking for the wrongdoers or even traitors. They would be found as far up as the entourage of the Pope in Rome, the Italian Chamber of Parliament, and the Hebrew circles, in particular.²¹ The realities of the world of Romanian immigrants to Italy and France were alarming as well. The actions undertaken by Simion Mândrescu, a citizen of Transylvania, together with Vladimir Ghica and Mihail

²⁰ Mihai D. Drecin, Raluca Lenarth, *op. cit.*, pp. 172, 176, 177.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 173.

Sturza, two citizens of the Old Kingdom of Romania, via the two organisations²² they had established in order to set up the Romanian Legion of Romanian prisoners of the Austrian-Hungarian Army who died on the Italian front, were obstructed from Paris by Traian Vuia, a citizen of Banat,²³ who was opposing “the involvement of non-Transylvanians” in the establishment of the Legion. Nevertheless, a Pro Romanian propaganda league would be established in Milan, following the example of the league in Rome. In Genoa, the Italian senator Fava would organise an enthusiastic conference in favour of Romania. Simion Mândrescu and Take Ionescu were expected to act in the same way.²⁴

After Octavian Goga arrived in Paris (30 September 1918), Hortensia’s letters to her husband would become increasingly frequent. Being proficient in the English language,²⁵ Hortensia was of the opinion that her presence in Paris would allow her to make a contribution to the diplomatic dialogue between the Romanian delegation and the North-American and English delegations who were already involved in the preliminary talks of the Peace Conference, besides being able to finally meet her husband after one year and a half.

Hortensia’s sadness at Octavian’s indifference towards her romantic gestures would make the energetic woman from Sibiu get involved in the sending of news from the Italian media to the Romanian diplomats in Paris. She would also argue in support of some of the diplomatic tactics that the Romanian delegation should have considered, since “the unbridled confrontations and ambitions (of the Romanian leaders in Paris – *our note*) could make us losing everything”.²⁶

Hortensia would draw her husband’s attention to the fact that the English political circles of noble origins supported the idea of Austria-Hungary as a state, which meant that Transylvania and Bucovina would be lost causes for the Romanian national interest.²⁷ Moreover, the presence of Hebrew leaders in a number of peace organisations from Italy as representatives of the Slavs and socialists in Triest, Fiume, and Trieste,²⁸ all territories claimed by Italians, Croats and Austrians, would make Hortensia even more convinced that the Hebrews would have a significant role in the summit talks during the coming Peace Conference, even more so given that the experts advising the North-American President W. Wilson included several persons of Hebrew origin. Consequently, Hortensia would advise her husband to “Act carefully and be able to make use of

²² The Romanian Union (V. Ghica and M. Sturza) and the Action Committee of Romanians in Transylvania, Banat, and Bucovina (Simion Mândrescu).

²³ The National Committee of Romanians in Transylvania, Banat, and Bucovina, headquartered in Paris.

²⁴ Mihai D. Drecin, Raluca Lenarth, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-176.

²⁵ BARB, *FOG*, S₁₁(84)/CDLXXXVIII, p. 3.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, S₁₁(71)/CDLXXXVIII, p. 2 obverse, 3.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, S₁₁(70)/CDLXXXVIII, p. 2. obverse.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, S₁₁(68)/CDLXXXVIII, p. 3.

their <<interest>> (material and economic interest in the future post-war Europe – *our note*), without getting too much involved or mixed up (with them – *our note*)”.²⁹ Hortensia was of the opinion that, given the circumstances, propaganda in favour of the Romanian national interest would play a decisive role. “We should have in each country a newspaper paid to shout out in our support. Just think about how much *Le Matin* (the French newspaper – *our note*) did in (1)913 for those Bulgarian beasts.”³⁰ Give money for what is worth, as now everything is done by words.”³¹ Particular attention should be paid to the commotion caused by the Serbian and Hungarian delegations in Paris. The Serbians were claiming the entire Banat up to the River Mureş and the Hungarians the western part of Romania, including cities such as Satu-Mare-Oradea and Arad. A part of the Italian press would glorify the sacrifices made by Serbia during the Great War, while the Hungarians would be remembered for the relationship between Garibaldi and Kossuth between 1848 and 1849.³² “You (the Romanian delegation in Paris – *our note*) should be wary of the Serbians, as they could cause us significant trouble. Not a day passes without them being mentioned by all the papers in the country (Italy – *our note*) as allies... The Serbians under our ruling (the Serbian minority in Banat, as part of Greater Romania – *our note*) would feel at home (meaning that they would have the same rights and obligations as the Romanians, without discrimination – *our note*), while we would disappear under their ruling (assimilated, serbianised – *our note*)”.³³ Moreover, Tavi Goga would be advised to open the eyes of the English journalist Seton Watson, otherwise a defender of Romanian national unity, to the fact that he should mitigate his pro-Serbian sentiments in relation to the Romanians.³⁴

In order to keep the flag of the Romanian national interest flying in Italy, Hortensia Cosma-Goga would get engaged in numerous, strenuous actions. She would attend, together with her sister, Lucia, the funerals of the aviator Mircea Zorileanu as well as of Matei Pop, Iuliu Maniu’s nephew, who both settled in the Peninsula under different circumstances, after visiting them in hospital and trying

²⁹ Mihai D. Drecin, Raluca Lenarth, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

³⁰ Articles supporting the Bulgarian raids in Dobrogea, resulting in the plundering and killing of Romanians in some settlements of the southern province.

³¹ Mihai D. Drecin, Raluca Lenarth, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

³² “You should see the support shown by all the correspondents (of Italian newspapers – *our note*) in Budapest towards the Hungarians represented by Kossuth, Garibaldi’s friend.” Cf. BARB, *FOG*, S₁₁ (95)/CDLXXXVIII, p. 4.

³³ Mihai D. Drecin, Raluca Lenarth, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-177, 184.

³⁴ “You should explain to Scotus (Scotus Viator – Seton Watson’s pseudonym – *our note*) who, like everyone else who is in love (with the cause of the people of the nations that were oppressed by the former Austria-Hungary – *our note*) is a little bit blind to the truth, that in the interest of permanent peace, he should clip the wings of his ravenous proteges (the Serbians wished for a Greater Serbia – *our note*), who could destroy Bosnia which is not Slavic (but would be under Serbia’s political control, despite the fact that the majority of its population was Muslim – *our note*), alongside our people (the Romanians – *our note*).” *Ibidem*, p. 184.

to lift up their spirits while they were still alive.³⁵ Hortensia would also visit the wounded Romanian soldiers of the Austrian-Hungarian army during their admission to various Italian hospitals. She would boost their morale, speak about the union of Romanians into one single state, give them small amounts from the little money she had, and wished them well.³⁶ She would also organise an exhibition of Romanian folk costumes, alongside the exhibition of the painter Virginia Tomescu, which was followed by a concert and a conference on the topic of the history of the Romanians.³⁷

A letter from 21 April 1919 makes reference to “Smuts’ success”³⁸ in deciding, in the name of the Military Council in Paris, that the Romanian Army should advance to the West, along the Satu Mare – Carei – Oradea – Salonta – Arad demarcation line. The liberation of the entire territory of Transylvania would make the Partenie Cosma family start preparations for their return home. They would arrive in Sibiu in September 1919.

Hortensia Cosma-Goga would be happy to be back home, to the Rounded Romania which she had fought for during her time in immigration in Italy. She would be less happy about the aloofness in her husband’s behaviour in the years between 1916 and 1919; the separation would become even more obvious after Goga’s involvement in the tumultuous political life of Wallachia and would eventually lead to divorce after 14 years of marriage.

A delicate soul sincerely in love with Tavi, Hortensia would never forget him for the rest of her life, not even after the National Poet got married to Veturia Triteanu, a former family friend. Following the former Prime Minister’s unexpected demise in 1938, on the occasion of his national funerals, Hortensia would put on his body that had been wrapped in the national flag and displayed in the foyer of the Romanian Athenaeum in Bucharest, a bouquet of 14 white roses whose embroidered ribbon read just one simple word, “Tavi”. One rose for each year of marriage.³⁹ That was seemingly a reply from the loving wife to the excuses muttered by Octavian Goga on his death bed for “My milk-white, fair-faced bride”, since Hortensia was the one with the blonde hair.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 178-179. See also Mihai D. Drecin, *Two Intriguing Moments in Iuliu Maniu’s Biography (1919, 1987)*, in *Annals of the Academy of Romanian Scientists. Series on History and Archaeology* (Bucharest), no. 1-2, 2023, pp. 55-61.

³⁶ Mihai D. Drecin, Raluca Lenarth, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 185.

³⁸ BARB, *FOG*, S_{II}(98)/ CDLXXXVIII, p. 8.

³⁹ Ion Itu, *op. cit.*, p. 113 The story was told by Hortensia’s sister, Lucia, who accompanied her during the sad event.